

March 20, 2015

Re:

SUPPORT SB 361 (increases penalties for animal cruelty) with the addition of language that would prevent gestation crates from being used in CT

Additionally,

OPPOSE HB 6043, Sunday hunting, and

SUPPORT HB 5707, “Beagle Freedom Bill”, outdoor sheltering for dogs

Dear Co-chair Kennedy, Co-chair Albis, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please accept this testimony in **SUPPORT SB 361 with the addition of language that would prevent gestation crates from being used in Connecticut.**

I support increasing the penalties for malicious and intentional animal cruelty, and ask that you add language to SB 361 that would prevent gestation crates from coming to Connecticut. The intensive confinement of farm animals is already here in Connecticut – chickens confined in tiny cages at KofKoff Egg Farms in eastern CT -- and I don’t want to see further expansion of these types of cruel farming practices.

The Committee Chairs have said repeatedly that if gestation crates were known to be here in Connecticut, that they would ban them. However, when asked to ban battery cages this year (HB 5688), which ARE here in Connecticut, the Chairs refused. This behavior is not in line with the wishes of Connecticut voters.

To be clear: I am requesting a ban on gestation crates, not a livestock advisory council (or any other type of diversionary nonsense). In other states, these councils have been created to actively thwart efforts to protect farm animals from abuse. In 2014, the proposed council (HB 5416) was heavily biased, with only 1 of 15 members representing animal welfare interests as its primary focus. Suggestions that were offered to allow for a balanced council makeup were rejected. Such suggestions included independent veterinarians, certified humane farmers, and CT-NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association). Polling shows 91% of Connecticut voters want legislation to prevent gestation crate use (2013 poll)--not a costly bureaucratic roadblock.

Additionally, I **OPPOSE Sunday hunting (HB 6034)**, because I want my one day of peace in the woods and because bow hunting is inhumane (high crippling rate), and I **SUPPORT HB 5707**, which would provide adoption opportunities for dogs and cats used in certain experiments and which would define outdoor sheltering standards for dogs.

Yours truly,

**Patricia Licea**

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